Washington State
Department of Transportation

Washington State Long-term Air Transportation Study (LATS)
Public Outreach and Involvement

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Washington State Department of Transportation, Aviation

Public Communication or Public Involvement

WSDOT is committed to proving and implementing an intensive outreach effort throughout the Washington State Long-term Air Transportation Study (LATS.)

The communications plan has been drafted in accordance with FAA Advisory Circular (AC) No. 150/5070-7 *Airport System Planning and FAA's Community Involvement Manual,* FAA-EE-90-03, which provides guidance on system planning public involvement and stakeholder consultation. The FAA Advisory Circular states specifically that:

Appropriate coordination of study drafts with the aviation public, community organizations, airport sponsors and users, and other interested parties is critical to the successful adoption and implementation of the final planning report. It is important that all affected or potentially affected parties perceive that the process is open, that the opportunity for participation exists, and that the study is designed to consider input from all of them.

The following plan embraces that philosophy to assure that the resultant system plan supports the public's best interest.

Background

In 2005, the Washington State Legislature adopted Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 5121, which requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to assess Washington State's aviation facilities. The information will then be used by a Governor-appointed planning council to make recommendations on what is needed to meet future air transportation demand.

Washington State Long-term Air Transportation Study
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WSDOT will embark upon this comprehensive airport system study – also known as the Washington State Long-term Air Transportation Study (LATS) - in conjunction with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The FAA will provide a majority of the funding for LATS, with supporting grants from WSDOT and the Washington State Legislature.

Also as part of LATS, a $50,000 state-funded and appropriated grant will be used to evaluate high-speed passenger rail. This evaluation will broadly study existing materials on how rail may be used to more efficiently utilize airport capacity by connecting airports. This effort will be coordinated as part of Phase II of LATS.

The product of LATS will be a cost-effective action plan to develop Washington State airports consistent with established goals and objectives. The process will also result in establishing perspectives on aviation priorities, such as airport roles, funding, policy strategies, and system trends. It will also identify the roles and characteristics of existing and recommended new airports, describe the overall development required at each, and include timeframes and estimated project costs. This will ensure that aviation plans remain responsive to the overall statewide air transportation needs.

Approach

LATS will encompass three phases:

- Phase I includes a review of airport inventory and capacity.
- Phase II includes detailed activity forecasts for each airport, market analysis of the commercial airports, a high-speed rail review, air cargo study and future capacity assessment.
- Phase III will involve the formation of a Governor's council to review the fact finding in Phases I and II and determine long-term airport development priorities to guide investment decisions.

System Plan Components

The overall goal of any state airport system planning process is to ensure the statewide system of airports are safely, efficiently, and adequately serving immediate and long-term air transportation needs. The system plan for Washington will include 139 public-use airports. Its main components will include:

1) Inventory of the current airport system
2) Identification of air transportation needs
3) Forecast of system demand
4) Consideration of alternative airport systems

5) Definition of airport roles and policy strategies
6) Recommendation of system changes, funding strategies, airport development
7) Preparation of an implementation plan
8) Exploration of issues that impact aviation in the study area
9) Special studies that may include high-speed rail, air cargo and commercial airport analysis
10) Performed in the context of a highly visible platform that includes strong public outreach efforts

WSDOT's system planning efforts do not include:
- Master planning
- Environmental planning
- Site selection studies for new airport facilities

A system plan serves as an important contribution to the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). The FAA's NPIAS is a national plan, updated every two years, that identifies for each state specific airport improvements that will contribute to achieving FAA goals. The NPIAS supports the FAA's strategic goals for safety, system efficiency, and environmental compatibility. Aviation system planning fits between the FAA's national planning effort, as documented in the NPIAS, and contributes to more detailed master and capital improvement plans for each individual airport.

Situation Analysis

Washington's aviation system is a public-private partnership comprised of 139 public-use airports. Airports are an essential component of Washington State's overall transportation system, providing critical links to people, goods, and services. They are a lifeline to and from isolated rural communities, especially for medical and emergency services, and enhance the quality of life for residents in their work and leisure. Additionally, airports allow for easy access by out-of-state visitors, supporting Washington's tourism business.

Airports play a vital role in the state's economy by facilitating jobs

> **WSDOT's Aviation Policy Framework**
> *It is in the State's interest that:*
> - **Aviation facilities and services be preserved that provide access for all regions of the state to the nation's air transportation system, provide for emergency management, and support local economies.**
> - **Transportation by air be safe.**
> - **There be sufficient airport capacity to respond to growth in demand to ensure access across the state, the nation and the world.**
> - **Negative environmental impacts of airports on people and the natural environment be mitigated.**

and commerce. According to an economic impact report from 2001, Washington's airport system annually generates 171,311, $4 billion in wages, and $18.5 billion in annual sales output. In spite of its importance to the state economy, inadequate planning, an antiquated funding base, a fluctuating economy and local land use conflict threaten the long-term health of Washington's aviation system.

In its 2004 policy development process, WSDOT Aviation was requested by its Aviation Advisory Committee to address three questions:

- Is Washington positioned to respond to a rapidly changing aviation environment?

- Is Washington using it's limited resources effectively and efficiently to meet the state's long-term interests in Aviation? What should the key priorities be?

- What strategic changes need to be made to satisfy the state's aviation policy, i.e., preservation, safety, capacity and environmental protection?

With input of key stakeholders, including intensive work by study groups on system planning, education and outreach, and safety, WSDOT Aviation identified key issues and goals needed to satisfy Washington State's interest in a healthy aviation system. The study groups were comprised of local elected and planning officials, airport representatives, pilot organizations, universities and members of the State Legislature.

The System Planning Study Group identified policy issues and system plan goals that included:

- Maximize value of public investment in the aviation system statewide.

- Increase consistency and collaboration between FAA, State of Washington, and local aviation policies, rules, and regulations by class of airport recognizing that different types of airports have different regulatory and policy needs.

- Assure adequate capacity to accommodate future aviation system needs, especially through airport preservation and enhancement.

- Anticipate and strategically respond to emerging aviation system trends and issues.

- Strive to maintain serviceability and fairness in current public investments in the aviation system, taking into account different classes of airports.

The System Plan Study Group also identified the need for additional data, necessary to better define the system and its strategic priorities, including:

- Gaps in availability of aviation facilities for emergency medical, fire fighting, disaster relief, national defense and air taxi needs

- System wide performance, role and interrelationship of airports

- Future capacity needs

- Projected cargo needs

- Gaps in airport capacity that may inhibit economic development of rural areas, or that prevent full participation of rural communities in political processes at the state level

- Reliever airports that are necessary to meet general aviation needs near large commercial airports, which if unmet would increase congestion at the commercial airports

- Capacity of reliever airports to continue to meet the demands of GA aircraft

It is in response to these recommendations and the subsequent legislative direction set forth in ESSB 5121 that the Washington State LATS is being conducted.

Public Outreach / Public Involvement Objectives

Increase public awareness about the study
This project is a three-phase approach to determine "what we have, what we need, and how we get there" in terms of air transportation capacity in Washington State. It is important to be proactive about communicating this message. Outreach objectives are to:

- Increase public awareness about the project
- Prevent surprises: actively engage the public
- Minimize misperceptions about what the study is and what it is not
- Promote use of the Web as primary source of information
- Document stakeholder/public involvement

- Minimize negative media coverage
- Engage public in decision making and gather concerns, questions and ideas

Key Audiences

Audience	Priority Concerns	Outreach Recommendations
Legislature	o Delivery of technically sound system plan to be used for the basis of making long-term airport investment decisions o Local constituent concerns o Intermodal integration and efficiency	o Initial interviews to gain perspective of expectations o Ongoing coordination with legislative staff o Regular briefings o Clear messaging about study purpose and outcomes
Airports	o Data collection /airport inventory and overall fact finding data reported accurately o Opportunity to contribute to a comprehensive plan for future airport development o Determining each airport's existing and future role within the state airport system	o Start early and disseminate study goals, objectives and tasks early
Urban Communities	o Impacts of capacity recommendations o Impacts on airport planning and investment o Land use conflicts o Noise o Traffic o Environmental impacts o GMA and other planning implications	o Clear messaging about study purpose and outcomes as well as what the study does not include o Multiple opportunities for involvement o Easily accessible information, presented in simple formats – leverage website and existing aviation forums / associations / meetings
Rural Communities	o Relationship to local land uses o Economic development o Funding o Emergency access o Community impacts	
General aviation pilots	o Airport maintenance o Funding of airport maintenance o Funding equity o Availability of airports o Stability of Search and	o Outreach to identify deficiencies in general aviation airports o Clarity about how designation hierarchy works

	Rescue functions	o Easily accessible information, presented in simple formats
Airlines	o Impact on long term facility and services planning o Taxes o Costs	o Involvement in any recommendations about aviation funding o Clear information about decision process
RTPO's/MPO's	o Consistency with regional/metropolitan transportation plans o Economic development o Access to emergency services o Impact on transportation facilities o Intermodal connections to airports o Regional airport capacity o Compatible land use o GMA implications	o Clear messaging about study purpose and outcomes, including presenting information relevant to rural areas o Multiple opportunities for involvement o Easily accessible information, presented in simple formats o Clear information about decision process
Business communities	o Economic development o Impacts on costs of doing business o Impacts on distribution systems	o Clear messaging about study purpose and outcomes o Multiple opportunities for involvement o Easily accessible information, presented in simple formats
Association of Washington Cities/Counties	o Economic development o Similar to other concerns listed above o Impact on land use	o Clear messaging about study purpose and outcomes, including presenting information relevant to rural areas o Multiple opportunities for involvement o Easily accessible information, presented in simple formats o Clear information about decision process
Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association (WA-APA)	o Land use planning o Economic and social issues o Transportation system integration o Land use o Capital facility	o Clear messaging about study purpose and outcomes, including presenting information relevant to rural areas o Multiple opportunities for involvement o Easily accessible information, presented in simple formats o Clear information about decision process

Rail / Freight	o High-speed passenger rail connectivity with major urban areas o Alternate modes of transportation	o Multiple opportunities for involvement

Strategies

- Keep local media and key audiences informed.
- Lead with the Web: Create a useful, interactive Web page and update news and milestones regularly.
- Promote project benefits using listserv, press releases, Web, ads, etc.
- Implement targeted communication efforts through regional public meetings.

Key Messages

- This study is a three-phase approach to determine "what we have," "what we need," and "what we need to do to get there."

- LATS will provide information and analysis through an open public process that will enable Washington leaders to make informed investment decisions about the aviation system and long-term airport development to meet future needs.

- Washington's aviation system generates hundreds of thousands of jobs and supports local economies throughout Washington State.

Team Members and Affiliations

WSDOT AVIATION TEAM
John Sibold, Director
John Shambaugh, Project Manager
Nisha Hanchinamani, Communications

CONSULTANT TEAM
Rita Brogan, CEO, PRR
Sonjia Murray, Project Manager, SH&E
Deborah Meehan, President, SH&E

Public Communications Tools and Tasks

Media Releases

WSDOT will issue media releases at key milestones in the progress of the LATS to announce dates of public outreach meetings and key study findings. All news releases will reinforce the key messages outlined in this communications plan.

Public Information Materials

Print materials will be made available to support public outreach that describes the purposes of LATS as well as information about the study findings as it progresses.

Website

WSDOT Aviation's website will feature a special section dedicated to the airport system plan that will include media releases, links to relevant publications, links to summaries of the Technical Advisory Committee meetings, links to relevant Web pages, information on LATS' progress, and opportunities for public involvement. Throughout the study process WSDOT Aviation will post finalized working paper, presentation materials, and other related reports. There will also be an interactive area for periodic public comment and to sign up for notification of meetings, reports, presentations, etc.

E-Newsletter

E-Newsletters will be issued to WSDOT Aviation's extensive database of aviation stakeholders to announce opportunities for public input, and to inform the public about study findings at periodic points in LATS. It is anticipated that, at a minimum, newsletters will be issued:

- To announce the study, introduce the Technical Advisory Committee and announce the upcoming Round #1 outreach meetings.
- To inform the community about the findings of the system inventory and to introduce the methodologies that will be employed during Phase II of LATS and announce the upcoming Round #2 outreach meetings.
- To discuss findings and next steps and to offer to brief stakeholder groups on LATS.

Aviation Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC)

A technical advisory committee has been assembled to assist WSDOT Aviation in the technical review of LATS. The purpose of the committee will be to work together towards a common set of objectives to ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach to the development of the air transportation study in accordance with state law.

The technical committee is made up of a diverse group of aviation and transportation-related professionals from varying geographical areas and backgrounds. ATAC is staffed with professionals possessing technical knowledge and expertise on multi-modal transportation issues, aviation system planning, airport operations, current and future industry trends, and market and capacity needs.   They will provide important guidance to the study process.

It is anticipated the ATAC will hold four meetings during 2006:
- In Month One, review the study scope and work program
- In Month Five, review inventory findings and proposed methodologies for the commercial airport market analysis.
- In Month 12, review and comment on the commercial airport market analysis and airport activity forecasts.
- In Month 16 review and comment on the Phase II study findings.

Aviation Stakeholder Outreach

Outreach Meetings
During Phase I WSDOT Aviation will sponsor two rounds of four meetings to inform members of the aviation community, and interested members of the public about LATS. **Round One** meetings will set the stage by defining the scope and objectives for LATS. **Round Two** meetings will present information about the airport inventory and capacity analysis conducted during Phase I and educate the public about the issues related to Phase II, which will focus on airport activity forecasts, commercial airport market analysis, high-speed rail, air cargo, and future capacity analysis

Coordination with Regional Transportation/Metropolitan Planning Organizations (RTPO/MPOs)
The participation of RTPO's and MPO's will be actively sought during the study process. In addition to including these organizations in the on-going program outreach, the project team will seek to brief RTPO's at their quarterly coordination meetings in February, May, August, and November.
As part of the special rail study the consultant team will be coordinating with the RTPO/MPO planning groups to review past high-speed rail and aviation-related efforts. These planning groups will contribute information throughout the high-speed rail effort and the outcome will provide guidance to how high-speed rail can potentially support

Washington State's long-term transportation infrastructure needs.

On-line Surveys
WSDOT Aviation will conduct two separate electronic survey efforts
eliciting feedback from those listed on its stakeholder database. The first
online survey, to be issued shortly after the project starts, will identify
information needs and elicit stakeholder feedback on aviation issues (such
as aviation safety, capacity, system maintenance or land use
compatibility). The second online survey will elicit feedback on issues
related to airport inventory and capacity.

Aviation Advisory Committee
WSDOT Aviation's standing Aviation Advisory Committee will provide
valuable insight in the progress and development of LATS. Presentations
on LATS will be provided to this group at its quarterly meetings.

Organizational Briefings
WSDOT Aviation will be available to present information on study issues
or findings when requested by local or regional government or aviation
stakeholder groups.